

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 2, 4, and 7-10, as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A sheet material information detecting device for detecting information on a sheet material, comprising:
  - a sheet material transport unit for transporting a sheet material along a sheet material transport path;
  - an impact applying unit for applying a physical impact to the sheet material in the sheet material transport path;
  - a detecting unit for detecting information corresponding to a force existing after attenuation of the impact applied to the sheet material, the detecting unit including a piezoelectric member; and
  - a positioning unit for positioning the sheet material,  
wherein, when the physical impact is to be applied, the positioning unit performs positioning of the sheet material such that a distance between the sheet material and the detecting unit opposed to the sheet material is a predetermined value not less than 0.

2. (Currently Amended) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 1, further comprising sheet material displacing unit comprising a sheet material displacing member protruding wherein said positioning unit protrudes into the sheet material transport path and is adapted to displace the sheet material upon contact with the sheet material.

3. (Previously Presented) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 1, wherein the impact applying unit comprises an impact applying member for applying an impact to the sheet material upon contact with the sheet material, the sheet material information detecting device further comprising an impact receiving member arranged at a position opposed to the impact applying member and adapted to receive the impact from the impact applying member.

4. (Currently Amended) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 2, wherein the impact applying unit comprises an impact applying member for applying an impact force to the sheet material upon contact with the sheet material, and wherein the sheet material displacing member said positioning unit is arranged at a position opposed to the impact applying member and is an impact receiving member adapted to receive the impact from the impact applying member.

5. (Previously Presented) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 3, wherein the detecting unit supports the impact receiving member and detects an impact received by the impact receiving member.

6. (Previously Presented) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 3, wherein the detecting unit is mounted on a side of the impact applying unit and detects an force impact through the impact applying unit.

7. (Currently Amended) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 4, wherein the sheet material displacing positioning unit determines at least one of a position of the sheet material with respect to the detecting unit, a position of the sheet material with respect to the impact applying member, and a position of the sheet material with respect to the impact receiving member.

8. (Currently Amended) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 7, wherein the sheet material displacing member positioning unit brings the sheet material into contact with the impact receiving member.

9. (Currently Amended) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 2, further comprising an auxiliary displacing member on a side opposed to the sheet material displacing member positioning unit with interposition of the sheet material therebetween, wherein the auxiliary displacing member brings the sheet material into contact with the positioning unit sheet material displacing member.

10. (Currently Amended) A sheet material information detecting device according to Claim 1, wherein the sheet material displacing member positioning unit further comprises a sheet material sensor for detecting a state and position of the sheet material.

11. (Original) A sheet material processing apparatus comprising the sheet material information detecting device as claimed in Claim 1, and a sheet material processing

portion for performing processing of the sheet material based on a detection result obtained by the sheet material information detecting device.

12. (Previously Presented) A signal output device comprising an impact applying unit for applying a physical impact to a sheet material and a detecting unit including a piezoelectric member for detecting information and outputting a signal upon application of the physical impact, wherein a positioning unit for controlling a position of the sheet material is provided at a position opposed to the impact applying unit with interposition of the sheet material therebetween.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of obtaining information on a sheet material, comprising the steps of:

supplying a sheet material to a position between an impact applying unit for applying a physical impact to the sheet material and a detecting unit for detecting information corresponding to a force existing after attenuation of the impact applied to the sheet material;

positioning the sheet material such that a distance between the sheet material and the detecting unit opposed to the sheet material is a predetermined value not less than 0;

applying the impact to the positioned sheet material; and  
detecting information on the sheet material.

14. (Cancelled)